

ART AND DESIGN

Paper 9704/01
Controlled Test

General comments

Almost two thirds of responses were for **Section A**, the open-ended starting points, for which **Question 2**, *Playthings*, **Question 4**, *Companions* and **Question 6**, *On the Edge* were the most popular choices. Less than 30% of all work seen was for **Section B**, the specific starting points, with the majority of responses for **Question 8**, the still life arrangement of several different items of footwear. Only 20% of submissions were received for **Section C**, the specific design briefs. Many Graphic Design candidates also chose the open-ended themes of **Section A**. Although most submissions were for Painting and Related Media, a substantial number of responses for Graphic Design and Photography were seen, but very few for Sculpture, Ceramics or Textiles.

The very best work was informed by coursework experiences, showing clear developments from directly observed sources or using personal photography to support the final outcomes. Clear evidence of personal engagement, maturity, and enthusiasm was apparent in much of the preparatory and supporting work, with interesting and sometimes bold experiments with media and techniques and explorations of alternative possible outcomes for the composition or design solutions of the work. The individual sense of confidence, determination and focus often continued to be developed during the actual Controlled Test. The majority of the work received was firmly worthy of the upper levels of the mark range with nearly 15% of all candidates achieving a proficient or better standard, and of these over 5% were outstanding.

Candidates at the mid levels of achievement generally engaged in some experiments with media, with competent recording and analysis from suitably chosen sources. The use of the information gained through this preliminary work, however, was often less successful. Worked often lacked confidence particularly in the visual relationships such as line, tone and colour with sometimes only the first idea thought of reproduced and refined for the examination work, with an outcome that was limited and a tendency to resort to copying the preliminary work in a mechanical way.

The weaker responses lacked personal investigation, relying on existing images from secondary sources for visual information, with extensive use of photographs from magazines and downloaded images from the Internet. Although these candidates were often able in technical terms, and could use media with some dexterity, they tended to use limited range of media, and did not develop their own ideas or experiment beyond a basic level. In the very weakest candidates' work, a basic achievement in all of the assessment objectives was commonplace, and little benefit was gained from the preparatory time. There were very slight and tentative levels of investigation and development of ideas. It must be said that over 80% of candidates achieved a satisfactory level of achievement and only very few fell below an acceptable standard for AS Level.

Some candidates used photography for preparatory work and it was noted that often these photographs, taken by the candidates themselves, were often better than the later attempts to use pencil, pastel or paint in copying the images made. With good photographic skills, there is no reason why candidates cannot carry on with their work in the medium of photography if this is their best area of expression. The use of photography for this examination is perfectly acceptable, as long as a record of the original images and the consequent development of work leading to a final submission are made.

A few candidates chose to ignore the question paper completely, preferring to make up their own questions to respond to which is unacceptable. The question paper is designed to elicit candidate responses to set themes and this component cannot be used as another piece of coursework with a free choice of subject matter.

The vast majority of submissions were well organised, with good, clear labelling. It is essential that the final piece is placed on top of the supporting work. All the work must be tied securely in an appropriate way to allow the Examiner to look through the work easily to see development from early investigation through to

final ideas and layouts. A few submissions were badly organised, with final pieces on the sheets not clearly labelled so that it difficult to discern which sheet was the piece done in the examination and with little selection and editing of preliminary studies.

Some Centres still send small work mounted on very large sheets of card or paper. There is no need to mount work on very large sheets. If the work is A2 size or smaller, it is perfectly acceptable to send it as A2 size work and there is no need to mount it on A1 size sheets.

Where work is done in acrylic or oil paint, sufficient time must be allowed for it to dry properly. Even if it appears dry, it often sticks to other sheets in transit and this causes considerable problems. There is no easy answer to this problem. A sheet of greaseproof paper, cling-film or other such protection is probably the best answer. A similar issue is found with chalk-based pastel, and whilst work must be carefully fixed with an appropriate product, a layer of thin paper over the work will help to stop smudging. In either case, paints or pastel, please do not stick the protective sheet down, just lay it over the work so that the Examiner can remove it easily o see the work.

It is recommended that candidates take time to seek out and consider work by other artists and designers. This, done at an early stage, can really strengthen their ideas and their responses.

Comments on specific questions

Section A Open-ended starting points

Question 1: Stacked and shelved

The theme was interpreted for Painting and Photography from a limited range of sources; the usual ones being books, clothes and bottles. Some candidates took unusual routes with blocks of high-rise flats or tenements. Some used supermarket shelves as their starting point.

Organic forms were less often seen, but where candidates thought sufficiently about layers of leaves, woodpiles, logs and such like the results was often strong.

Digital photography was used effectively in many cases, with the most successful candidates using cameras to gather information with directly observed studies as well. In the work of all but the lowest levels of achievement, candidates explored the pattern created by stacking or shelving well through development of abstract qualities, with the better outcomes using subtle layering and even relief effects to enhance strong compositional ideas.

Question 2: Playthings

Children's toys, dolls and pets were quite popular, as expected, but more unusually some saw actual people as playthings. A few used the starting point of playthings to develop powerful images by careful selection of parts of toys to create unusual compositions, often to a quite abstract degree. There were some very strong candidates who used dramatic lighting to increase the three-dimensional and mood qualities in their work, with deep shadows and bright, sharp highlights in the plastic qualities of the toys.

Most of the less able just took one toy or doll, often from an image gleaned from a magazine, with only a handful basing their work on first hand experience. As the magazine images were limited in terms of information, most were severely limited and poorly seen and recorded.

Question 3: Pulled apart

Some candidates responded to this topic in a quite straightforward way, and concentrated on observed subjects such as torn paper, zips, buttons and clothes, as well as toys and manufactured objects such as clocks and parts of engines. Some of this observed work was very good indeed. A more interpretative approach was adopted by others, with topics such as families separated, mothers and children pulled apart. Where these worked best was when they were grounded in substantial research and experiment. Excellent knowledge of relevant artists was seen in other candidates, with references, for example, to Goya's 'Saturn devouring his son' and other works from his later years, 'The disasters of War' series, as well as a very apt reference to the Chapman Brothers 'Hell' and other works.

One or two candidates saw this question as an opportunity to examine something from their own lives, such as the experience of living as an exile from one's own culture in a foreign country.

Question 4: Companions

A great many studies of pets such as dogs and cats were seen, as well as horses and even goldfish! Some of these were good, of course, but many were based on secondary imagery and this let them down. Another strong theme was of husbands and wives, parents and children and families in general. Some candidates used personal photography to support their work with success.

Question 5: Sacred Stones

This theme was the least undertaken of **Section A**, but nevertheless a few very interesting interpretations were received for both Painting and Photography. When the primary research had been carried out by the candidate at specific site such as a temple, some very strong and very evocative work resulted, with candidates really attempting to give the idea of the sense of the building being imbued with the idea of a sacred quality. Other approaches, such as working from pictures of Stonehenge or churches that were not observed were less successful. Observations of jewellery, perhaps thinking of sacred as meaning valuable or beautiful, were sometimes very good, especially where the candidate managed to capture shiny or reflective surfaces with some skill.

Question 6: On the Edge

Although candidates made use of a wide range of sources for this theme, most interpretations were based on research from the human figure, with cliff climbers, mountaineers and people balanced on window ledges or ladders predominating. Directly observed drawings of people, sometimes combined with personal digital photographs of figures, were often scanned into computers for manipulation and combination with images of buildings and cliffs. Another popular thread running through the work was the idea of *living on the edge* being the pressure of life, with a nervous breakdown imminent. The influence of Surrealism was quite strong in a few cases, with melting objects on the edge of tables à la Salvador Dali. Levels of achievement were always dependent on personal investigation, analysis and development; those who seized on ready-made images from secondary sources were seldom able to evaluate the information in terms of visual relationships to organise an independent outcome.

Section B Specific starting points

Question 7: Three or four plants of varying sizes which are in the process of being put into pots or containers. Next to the plants are a watering can, other gardening tools and a pile of compost on a newspaper.

The still life arrangement of plants of varying sizes was rarely attempted, perhaps because the question was quite complicated in terms of the requirement of not only plants but also containers, watering can and other gardening tools as well as compost and the idea of the plants being put into pots as well. The best work adopted interesting viewpoints and offered a precise analysis of the ellipses spouts and handles of the various pots and containers and a sensitive control of subtle nuances of tone, colour and textures seen in the plants and especially the compost. At mid levels of achievement some thought was apparent in the selection and arrangement of the objects, but they tended to be analysed and executed separately from each other through an inconsistent observation of light and shade, or were vague in definition at key points. Very few less able submissions were seen, probably for the very reason that it was a complicated question.

Question 8: An arrangement of several different items of footwear

By contrast with **Question 7**, the alternative still life arrangement of footwear attracted the most responses for **Section B**. Many very able studies were seen for drawing and painting, with a few quite strong photography submissions as well. In the mid levels of the mark range the structures of footwear with buckles, laces and stitching were generally well established, but the observation of a general form and a response to a directional light source, in terms of observing areas of tone and colour to create a sense of overall unity was often inconsistent or rendered in separate parts, with each shoe existing in a separate space. Also, similarly, some studies split the arrangement up, ignoring the idea of organising the shoes into a composition and just drawing or painting each item of footwear as a separate and individual study. Many ignored the idea of the shoes sitting on a surface or existing in a real space, and this lack of awareness of the importance of the surrounding space made for a less than interesting composition in some cases. However, very few weaker submissions were seen as the less able candidates tended to avoid this question.

Question 9: The whole or the upper half of a figure reclining on a low bed or a sun-lounger.

Very few responses, but most of those seen were of a good standard, among which were some outstanding submissions. Some of the most adventurous approaches portrayed the subject in a specific setting such as a garden, by a swimming pool or a beach. A few took photographs of a parent, sibling or friend to support their work, and this generally helped in defining colour and form, but still left some candidates in some confusion over anatomy and muscle structure.

Question 10: A selected view of an area where small boats are moored.

There were few responses for this question. Most of the submissions seen were very competent and well-sustained observations, particularly of the shapes of boats seen from above from a quayside or bank with some very well seen surface reflections of water. At the mid and lower levels of achievement the tendency was to isolate a whole boat or two or three boats in the centre of the composition, when a more exciting composition by consideration of cropping and selecting would have brought more visual success.

Question 11: Interpret the whole or part of an extract

A disappointing number of responses were seen for the literary extract, describing a camping scene at night. Candidates who saw the potential in the dramatic lighting suggested by the extract resulted in very interesting research, through digital recording accompanied by sustained first hand drawings of faces or hands lit by the spirit lamp and the moths and insects attracted to it. The best outcomes developed excellent painted or pastel compositions, full of light and dark, drama and a sense of the outdoors. Mid level achievements were based on competent research, but evaluations concerning the refining and development of recorded information led to a limited range of compositional ideas. There were very few less successful attempts, but those seen were generally inhibited by poor initial investigations.

Section C Specific design briefs

Question 12: Design a logo for a tea, coffee and chocolate company called AROMA

The design for a logo for a company dealing in coffee, tea and hot chocolate called AROMA, asked candidates to use the trade name as it would look on labels for packets and jars. This was by far the most frequently undertaken design brief in **Section C**, with work covering the full ability range submitted. The strongest work was researched from excellent personal drawings or photography of coffee beans and suitable leaves that might or might not have been leaves from tea plants, but at least looked authentic. Many good candidates used well-developed letterforms sometimes to suggest steam rising as if from a cup of coffee or tea, and there was some strong use of appropriate colour as well, with an emphasis on browns and greens. The development of layout and refinement of line, shape, tone and colour for crisp, clear and elegant logos was interesting to see in the supporting studies. Mid level responses tended to follow a taught formulaic approach, made up drawings of coffee or cups, with sometimes poor lettering employed in the logo, and sometimes a kind of 'house style' from candidates in the same Centre all doing the same question, which led to very similar outcomes from individual Centres rather than a personal approach and sense of engagement.

In the less successful candidates work the lack of research and organisation was apparent, resulting in designs which were confused with too many different shapes and images. This suggested a lack of experience with the design of logos. All too often inexperience led to over complex conclusions rather than careful refining and good judgement in the selection, development and cultivation of a strong layout. Overall thought about shape and confident use of fonts and colour was lacking. The weaker submissions were invariably based on poorly chosen typefaces derived from tracings from magazine lettering or downloaded from a computer with little discernment. In some cases imagery was simply poorly chosen downloaded pictures of coffee beans, even 'clip art', with very limited investigations and resulting designs that totally rely for evidence of development on just sticking down examples of advertising found in magazines and on the Internet.

Question 13: Design a poster for a Festival of Dance

Not a popular choice of question. The design brief for a poster was carried out best by those with experience of organising image and lettering together in a strongly organised layout. With good research of appropriate dancers some candidate's blended figures with strongly suggested movement and rhythm with areas of lettering of an appropriate size, typeface and colour. Some used silhouettes with success, with an awareness of negative space and the power of just black and white to create a sense of drama and music.

However, far too many weak candidates tried to simply blend a painting of dancers, sometimes of a Degas painting or cut out from a magazine, with weak lettering that was scattered over the randomly.

Question 14: Repeat pattern for a shop selling toys.

The repeat pattern design brief for a toyshop attracted only a handful of responses. A few, from candidates clearly experienced with repeat pattern design, were very successful. Others had chosen the question to produce just images of Walt Disney or cartoon characters that were arranged spread out on the sheet of paper with no sense of a properly worked out repeat. There were some excellent examples of block printing, with well-considered motifs repeating in sometimes quite complex ways.

Question 15: Design for costumes for a Carnival based on fruits, flowers and vegetables.

The costume design brief for participants in a carnival parade based on the observation of fruits, flowers and vegetables attracted a number of competent to excellent responses. All successful candidates made good studies of well-chosen items to inform inventive ideas for costumes. Some candidates wisely chose a single fruit and a single flower or vegetable rather than try to incorporate too many ideas and forms, realising intelligently at an early stage that some fruits and flowers lend themselves to development into a dress or costume better than others. The best developments explored poses through accomplished figure studies to present striking final pieces, seen from various angles such as front and back and with detailed studies of close up parts of the design to show construction of the fabric and decorative features. Some Fashion Design specialists who understand the process of making clothes also extended the outcome by submitting fabric swatches and even making up small examples of decorative details or model dresses. Mid level submissions offered competent research of fruits and flowers, but a further extension of preparatory work in the search for more effective final solutions would have led to higher achievements. Very weak candidates seen were usually inexperienced in costume design and made poor decisions about development of appropriate outcomes through a lack of understanding.

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Paper 9704/02
Coursework A

General comments

The number of entries was very similar to last year with *Painting and Related Media* still the most popular area of study. Although approaches varied enormously, there was evidence that most Centres had provided well structured courses, and that their candidates' submissions met all of the Assessment Objectives. Most submissions were well organised and the work was clearly presented on sheets of thin card or in folders that were clearly labelled.

The very best work seen was often from the odd individual candidate rather than an entire Centre of very good submissions. There seemed to be much more work falling into the mid to lower mark ranges this year. Generally Centre assessments have been generous this session and that moderate to significant scaling has had to be applied in many cases. There were very few instances where Centres had been reasonably accurate or had undervalued achievement levels.

Much more work failed to meet the basic criteria for this level of examination. These candidates were ill-prepared. They had not practiced enough of the basic drawing skills to be able to visualise their ideas successfully. Their research was too often confined to a total reliance on secondary source material which was poorly copied and showed little evidence of abilities to interpret or to provide some form of personal input. The domain of Critical Knowledge and Understanding was practically ignored, with no evidence of referencing other artists' work, or of other cultures.

Also of concern was the very high marks awarded by Centres to such weak work. Centres must realise that study at AS/A level should be demanding and stretch a candidate's abilities beyond those expected for IGCSE.

Comments on areas of study

Painting and Related Media

Submissions covered the full ability range as well as a varied choice of subject matter, which was explored in an equally varied range of techniques and processes.

The most successful candidates based their research on studies from direct observation, collected through drawing, sketching, colour studies, and their own photography. In addition written notation often provided an aide memoir.

This research was based on easily accessible subjects that could be revisited and recorded at different times of the day, night or seasons. There were also a few highly original themes expressing the candidates' response to more emotive, conceptual or abstract subjects. However their research always made good use of first hand resources where possible.

Studies were then developed through experiments in a variety of media; pen and ink, stick and ink, bleach, charcoal, oil pastels, chalk pastels, mono-print, collage and often a mixture of these. A wide variety of painting media was also seen. Compositions were adventurous and candidates had explored the unusual viewpoint.

The majority of submissions fell within mid-levels of achievement. Whilst there was evidence of gathering information from visual stimuli, images created in one medium tended to be repeated using several different techniques without showing any further development. When photography was used there was often too much copying from a single print as an end in itself.

Good levels of competence could be measured in the domains of Manipulative Skills and Aesthetic Awareness, but candidates at this level lacked the ability to apply critical judgment to their work or the imagination to develop ideas further. Contextual references usually consisted of postcards or poor downloaded images, included as an after thought at the end of folders. Consequently there was little evidence of meeting the assessment objectives - Personal Qualities and Critical Knowledge and Understanding.

The very weakest submissions suffered from inadequate or superficial research. There were many using the theme of animals; lions, elephants, antelope copied from photographs which were rarely the candidates' own. Media was confined to pencil or coloured pencils, with little understanding of tone or colour mixing. The influence of fantasy illustration was very prevalent, but again this was poorly copied or even in some cases created purely from imagination.

3D Design and Sculpture

Submissions covered a range of processes; ceramics, clay-modelled forms, welded metal, wire and card construction and one very original puppet.

Two submissions reached the outstanding levels of achievement. One candidate had created a puppet as well as a life size puppet with a latex mask created from a head modelled from life. The other submission had also used the human figure and developed a life size welded kneeling figure which had been attached to a wall of the School. Both submissions were illustrated with excellent quality photographs, and the puppet was accompanied with a CD video of the puppets in motion.

There were other less successful modelled sculptures based on figures. Evidence of research was more limited, consisting of a few sketches which did not even directly relate to the final outcomes. The quality of photographs to support these entries was also very poor.

Ceramic work featured slipware but glazing techniques were very basic.

Wire and card constructions lacked research and evidence of practise with the chosen medium. There were no models or maquettes to show any development of ideas. Again supporting photographs were of a very poor quality.

Graphic Design

Some outstanding work was seen from Centres specialising in this area. The design briefs were challenging and involved the creation of multiple outcomes in a variety of media and processes. For example, a product identity brief was applied across a range of ideas which included business cards, T shirts, poster designs, surf and skate-board decoration, and flyers. The preparatory work was experimental with numerous tests of letterforms, layouts and colour-ways.

Mid and lower range submissions were often cluttered and muddled designs for CD covers, logos, business cards and letter headings. There was little indication of starting points for these designs except for a sheet of commercial designs and clip art. Little consideration was given to the style of fonts or of the integration of text and image.

Photography

Some outstanding work was seen, again from Centres specialising in this particular medium. Outcomes had explored genres of photojournalism, landscape, fashion, still life and portraiture. The most successful had developed skills in both wet processes and digital photography. Workbooks were used to record exposure and aperture settings as well as the various stages of computer programmes that were used to develop the final stages.

Less successful work demonstrated competent abilities to explore chosen subjects and ideas with a camera but many had submitted prints which had been commercially produced.

Fashion and Textile Design

All the Fashion submissions fell in the mid to lower mark ranges. A few demonstrated limited mark-making skills but at least their designs were developed from directly observed studies of natural forms. Others were more reliant on secondary sources, although there was evidence of some lively exploration.

Some much weaker candidates were not really producing any original designs. They were just drawing patterns on a dress shape. Supporting sheets were largely fashion photographs cut from magazines.

Textile Design submissions included screen-prints, block prints, stencil prints and one batik piece was seen.

There were some complex and beautifully screen printed repeat patterns based on flowers and traditional Islamic designs. There was evidence of in depth research and development of ideas.

Block and stencil prints were much simpler with little evidence of starting points and little understanding of repeat motifs.

ART AND DESIGN

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Coursework B

General comments

The best work demonstrated that the different emphasis between the two coursework components had been fully understood and applied. These candidates had submitted well focused projects that included in-depth research and development of ideas that had been sustained through to finished outcomes. Skills gained from Component 2 had given them confidence to express themselves in a personal manner.

The best supporting sketchbooks were a joy, full of experiments in different media, source material, photographs, colour schemes, trial samples: generally bursting with ideas and clearly compiled over the course.

Unfortunately these were the exception with most submissions falling into the mid to lower achievement levels. Many of these submissions lacked any depth of research or exploration with folders consisting of a number of competent finished compositions without relevant research or evidence of original source material. The final work lacked a freshness and vitality because they had been re-worked several times within the supporting sheets.

The content of many of these sketchbooks had very little relevance to any work seen in folders. Many were merely cut and paste assembled scrapbooks with no real substance.

There were a number of very weak submissions which were almost identical in content and standard to work submitted for Component 2. Much of these were sheets of unrelated studies copied from secondary source material.

Comments on Areas of Study

Painting and Related Media

A wide variety of media was seen including some excellent and inventive combinations of mixed media.

The best work was imaginative and ambitious both in scale and content. It was encouraging to see such large scale examples of water colour compositions developed from first hand studies of the local landscape. Other Centres had encouraged candidates to resolve their ideas as large paintings on canvas. These demonstrated confidence, particularly in the handling and control of media, and combined imagery to create powerful compositions. There was also an example of a mural painting, submitted as a series of clear photographs showing stages of the work in progress as well as the final composition within the School. Some printmaking was included where a number of processes had been used to a very high standard of technical control. Final prints were personal, inventive with good cultural and historical references.

Mid-level submissions were also ambitious in intent, but levels of understanding in some areas of the assessment objectives meant that intentions were not always carried through successfully. The study of the work of other artists was more superficial, and influences were not always reflected in candidates' own work.

The weak work lacked a focus and chosen subjects were not explored in any depth. Folders contained too much unrelated work with an over-reliance on copying from secondary sources. In some cases the finished pieces had been carried out in a medium not seen in any of the supporting sheets.

Graphic Design

This continues to be a popular choice, and once again most entries fell in the higher mark range.

Much of the very best work had been built on skills gained from Component 2 where candidates had developed a professional approach to demanding, realistic design briefs. There were some large scale designs including surface designs for surf-boards, large posters to advertise a surfing competition as well as swimwear designs for the various teams.

The 'journey' that the candidate had taken during their course was usually very clearly presented. Alternative ideas had always been explored and, even if much of the work had been generated on the computer, there was always evidence of hand drawn illustrations or lettering.

Unfortunately some of the less successful entries were heavily reliant on computer generated designs, especially using images downloaded from the Internet. There was little evidence of candidates using their own first hand sources collected through drawing or their own photography, which could then have been scanned into the computer and manipulated.

Photography

Only a few entries achieved a very high standard. There were examples of a photojournalist approach which explored local cultures, reflecting traditional and modern lifestyles of the people. Others had produced Surrealist imagery using digital layering processes to create illusionary effects. Many had used ambitious studio props and lighting arrangements to achieve their desired outcomes.

There were also a few very much weaker submissions seen. Generally these showed very basic commercially produced snapshots of local village life. They all seemed to have been taken at the same time with little consideration for composition, lighting or different viewpoints.

This year some film and animations were also submitted.

One outstanding film of almost professional quality documented the journey of a cattle herder who went to the city. This was beautifully lit, shot and edited. The submission included a supporting folder of drawings, story board and still photo shots.

The second film was of repeating patterns created using computer software and was much less inventive.

There was also an example of basic computer animation. The initial research was rather limited and the development of the visual aspect of the character had been subsumed by the technical aspects of animating the figure.

Fashion and Textile Design

There were very few good Fashion submissions seen. The best work had made use of extensive first hand drawings of broken bottles, plant studies and coral. Elements discovered from these studies appeared in the final garment designs as either surface decoration or in the shape of the garment itself. The development was very clear and the outcomes highly original.

Other entries were much more limited in sources of reference. These were mostly cut outs from catalogues, with final outcomes confined to fashion illustrations copied from these secondary sources.

Two very competent screen printed fabric designs were seen. Up to seven colours were used, expertly registered and with ample research and development.

Other weaker block printed fabric designs had no evidence of first hand studies. They demonstrated a poor sense of aesthetic awareness and a limited understanding of a repeat pattern using negative and positive shapes.

3D Design and Sculpture

Too few entries were seen to make any general comments this year.

ART AND DESIGN

Paper 9704/04

Related Study

General comments

Nearly half of all the work assessed for the Related Study achieved the upper levels of the mark range and among these were a pleasing number of excellent or outstanding submissions. However, around 10% of the Studies offered a less-than-adequate response. This continues to cause concern to the Examiners because a higher level of success ought to be possible with this Component which, as the syllabus states, is expected to grow from the support and guidance of teachers. If teachers themselves feel the need for assistance and advice they should contact CIE to obtain a copy of the CDROM: AS/A-Level Art and Design Standards, or gain access to the CIE online help and support services, for which a discussion group with an experienced Examiner is available (http://teachers.cie.org.uk/login/login_form).

It was noted by the Examiners that the weaker responses were often linked to the absence of an OPF (Outline Proposal Form). Centres are reminded that it is a requirement of the syllabus that an OPF, stating intentions and sources for first-hand study, is submitted with the Study, whether it has been approved by the teacher or sent to CIE for an Examiner's approval. While it is entirely acceptable for teachers to approve the proposals of their own candidates, it may still be advisable to seek advice from CIE if there is a risk that the Examiners might consider that particular topics or intentions are not relevant to the Assessment Objectives. The completion of the OPF should give positive encouragement to candidates to focus on their intentions in relation to their current coursework.

It was evident that the majority of candidates had received very effective advice and support from their teachers. Clearly, this had generated an initial sense of motivation in relation to a candidate's main coursework interests, which led to the identification of accessible sources for first-hand investigation. The use of local sources encouraged a focus on the work of particular practitioners or specific sites as well as the potential for comparisons with international or mainstream examples from books or the Internet. Further guidance from teachers then led to a productive gathering of information, the selection and organisation of visual and written material and the structure, sequence and presentation of the Studies. Advice to focus on a selection of examples encouraged personal analyses, comparisons and evaluations, relating back to coursework experiences as well as a growing awareness of cultural and/or historical contexts.

Many candidates were therefore able to offer a very good balance between personal coursework interests, first-hand investigations from galleries, exhibitions, practitioners' studios, and sites, and other examples from secondary sources. In the less successful submissions, however, such a balance was not apparent as there was a predominant focus on the candidate's own work without any reference to historical or contemporary practice, or a complete focus on information from secondary sources without any first-hand investigation or relationship to coursework experiences.

Comments on various levels of achievement

Higher Levels

Several outstanding submissions were seen which met all of the Assessment Objectives to the highest levels. Such achievements were exceptionally sustained, coherently structured and elegantly presented. They were also focused and clearly personal in their practical and written analyses and evaluations. An encouraging number of candidates also submitted excellent Studies which showed considerable enthusiasm for carefully chosen topics which were strongly motivated by direct experience of the selected work of artists, designers, sculptors, photographers, craft workers or architects, in relation to their main coursework interests. A very stimulating range of local practitioners' work and architectural sites were focused on to inform analyses, comparisons and critical understanding.

Thorough planning of layout and presentation led to a variety of inventive formats with sensitive use of distinctive papers to create a variety of visually exciting juxtapositions of text and image. Both in the examples and those produced through computer processes, a concern for the sequence and integration of selected visual and written material, making use of notations, headings and sub-headings, offered a high clarity of communication.

Mid Levels

The majority of submissions showed a competent level of research, organisation and presentation. There was some evidence of personal commitment, interest and enthusiasm, leading to articulate written descriptions of works, but less concern to engage in practical analyses or comparisons to develop or explain how the investigation *related* to coursework experiences. In some cases, lengthy interviews with practitioners were recorded verbatim but with little or no analysis or comment.

Computer processes were used well to organise and integrate visual and written material, usually within conventional A4-sized formats. Some handwritten submissions at this level were quite difficult to read because of the combinations of various media – for example, silver ink on coloured textured paper or writing on plastic sheets laid over illustrations. There were no doubts that first-hand familiarity with the works focused on had motivated a personal interest in the investigation, but there was also a tendency to place more emphasis on works of international renown which were only accessible from books or the Internet. Better results were apparent when these examples were compared with the research from local sources, but the lack of explanation of how they related to the candidate's own interests inevitably limited the depth of personal evaluations and critical judgements.

Lower Levels

The Studies which did not meet the Assessment Objectives evenly enough to achieve more than an adequate response invariably showed a heavy reliance on secondary information from books or the Internet. Sources for first-hand investigation were either uncertain or patchy - for example, a few photographs of the candidate meeting an artist or designer were offered as evidence of visits to studios or workshops, but there were no further comments or focus on any particular works. Surveys of media and processes often lacked personal analysis or even simple references to the contexts, styles, themes or aesthetic qualities of any particular works. Such approaches offered very few attempts to make comparisons or critical judgements. References to coursework experiences were sparse or difficult to find, and very little consideration had been given to the structure, sequence and presentation of the material. Conversely, some submissions were concerned wholly or mostly with analyses of the candidate's own coursework, with little or no reference to the work of others. A small number of Studies concerned themselves with entirely inappropriate topics – for instance: *'The Tourist Industry'*, *'Women's Liberation'* or *'Golf'* – with no references to any works of art at all.

Some submissions included no more than two or three illustrations which were poorly reproduced and which were given uncertain or inaccurate notations. Covers, titles, introductions and bibliographies were often neglected, as if the Studies were the product of last minute compilations rather than a planned project in relation to specific intentions which, in most cases, were unknown as an OPF had not been included. Some Studies were bolstered with irrelevant scrap-book cuttings, interviews and questionnaires, unselected biographies, chronological lists and regurgitated technical manuals which led nowhere in terms of informing personal evaluations. So much more could have been achieved, especially in relation to coursework achievements.